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BULLETIN

OF

THE PENNSYLVANIA MUSEUM

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ANNOUNCEMENT

At the request and under agreement of cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution, the new Director of the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, Mr. Langdon Warner, left for Japan on December 7, 1917, on leave of absence for one year; the primary object of the arrangement being the taking advantage of certain opportunities for securing objects of art which were thought too good to lose. In order to facilitate the plans made by Mr. Warner, his friend Mr. Hamilton Bell consented to assume the responsibilities of Director *pro tem.*, during Mr. Warner's absence. He entered upon his functions on January 1st, having arrived in this city some days before that date.

Mr. Hamilton Bell was born in London, England, and educated at private schools and by tutors. At the age of fifteen he entered the Slade School of Art in London and subsequently worked in the studio of his uncle, Sir Edward Poynter, President of the Royal Academy, on several decorative schemes. At this time, he had the benefit of the advice and guidance of such noted artists as William Morris, Sir Edward Burne Jones, Lord Leighton, Walter Crane and others. He exhibited pictures at the Royal Academy, the Grosvenor Gallery and other London exhibitions.

It was in 1885 that he first came to the United States and decided to settle here. In 1887 he began the practice of architect, landscape and formal gardening and the decorative arts in New York. At this period of his career he also undertook to design scenery and costumes for Sir Henry Irving, Augustin Daly, Lawrence Barrett, Taber and Marlowe and others.

He was an early member of the Architectural League, became a member of its council, its secretary, and was chairman of various committees. He was also one of the founders and first secretary of the Fine Arts Federation and of the Municipal Art Society of New York. He managed several art exhibitions most successfully; and was appointed Art Director when the New Theater was founded. He held that position until the theater finally closed. During that period he did the designing and superintending of every production given at that theater. It was he who managed the opening ceremonies of the New Public



HAMILTON BELL
Acting Director of the Museum

Library in New York as well as those of the Cleveland Museum of Art, where he arranged and catalogued the Inaugural Loan Collection of 1916.

Mr. Bell has traveled extensively in Europe, including Russia, as well as in the Far East. Also in this country, he has visited and studied the principal museums and has familiarized himself with their collections.

His training as an architect should prove especially valuable at this time when the question of erecting new art buildings and galleries is under discussion in this city and many problems structural and of the heating and especially of the lighting of museum buildings and picture galleries must be earnestly studied with a view to producing the best results.

One of the most serious disadvantages under which a group of people about to erect a museum building labor is that there is hardly any architect who has built a museum. If there is, he seldom is employed again because he is judged by his mistakes rather than by his achievements. This, of course, is an error of judgment. Practice makes perfect. The architect who has made a mistake is not likely to repeat it. He probably has studied that particular point diligently ever since and one stands a far better chance to work out the ideal museum with a man who has had previous experience of the peculiar necessities of museum work than with a new man whose head is full of daring experiments which he is eager to try at your expense. There are very few museums that are soul-satisfying to the individual who has to work in them. That individual usually is the least thought of, general effects being usually the paramount requisite of the committees in charge.

It seems to me, therefore, that a director who also is architect and can authoritatively assert his needs and the practical possibility of meeting them, must be invaluable as an addition to any building committee.

This and much more, as time goes on, we are discovering Mr. Bell to be—and the Museum authorities, therefore, are to be congratulated in having, in their hour of need, secured the presence at the helm of so valuable a Director.

S. Y. S.



A CHINESE CARPET. LENT BY A FRIEND OF THE MUSEUM

Fortunately for the student of Chinese Art, we can be reasonably certain that no carpets woven in that country prior to the great Ming Dynasty (1368 to 1643 A. D.) are likely to be presented for our consideration. Whether or no the few pieces preserved in the Japanese Imperial Treasury, the Shōsōin of Todaiji in Nara, are of Chinese origin and of the early date, posterior to which no objects are said to have been added to the treasure, is for us a matter of small importance.

Those highly prized textiles are never likely to leave their far-eastern home and none like them have been or are ever likely to be, found elsewhere.

Consequently we are safe in saying that no rugs earlier than Ming are extant and indeed but few that can safely be ascribed to that dynasty.